3 1223 00855 5261

BOOK NO.	ACCESSION
B H364k	204871

Form 16 30M-6-29

DATE DUE

	JUN 5 - '84		
	201-6503		Printed In USA

Form 11

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-BUW-897

THE LAST DAYS OF

HEINRICH HEINE.

Krinitz, Elise

BY

CAMILLE SELDEN. pseud.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY

CLARE BRUNE.

LONDON:
REMINGTON & CO., PUBLISHERS,
18, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.
1884.

PRINTED BY
JOHN AVERY & CO.,
ABERDEEN.

B
H364k
204871

PREFACE.

"I BECAME acquainted with Heinrich Heine towards the close of his life. His poems and writings were familiar to me many years previous to my meeting him for the first time face to face.

"I arrived from Vienna, bringing with me a small parcel, containing a few sheets of music sent by one of his admirers.

"To ensure safe delivery, I carried it myself to his abode, and, after handing it to the servant, was turning away, when a sharp ring resounded from the adjoining room. The domestic answered it, and I was startled by hearing a somewhat imperious voice forbidding my departure. A door

opened and I entered a very dark room, where I stumbled against a screen covered with coloured paper in imitation of lacker. Behind this screen a man, sick and half blind, lay stretched upon a low couch; though no longer young, he still appeared so, and his face bore traces of former beauty. Imagine, if you can, the smile of Mephistopheles passing over the face of Christ—Christ draining the dregs of the chalice. The invalid raised himself on his pillows and held out his hand, saying it gratified him to converse with anybody arriving from 'yonder.' A sigh accompanied this touching 'yonder,' which was breathed from his lips, like the echo of a distant and well-known melody. Friendship progresses rapidly when begun beside a sick couch and in the proximity of death. When I left, he gave me a book and begged me to visit him again. I

thought it was a mere polite formula, and kept away, fearing to disturb the invalid. He wrote me a scolding letter. The reproof both touched and flattered me, and my visits henceforth ceased only on the sad February morning when we accompanied him to his last home!"

The above few lines, whilst explaining how I first knew Heinrich Heine, serve as an introduction to a sketch depicting the last days of his life. When more than fifteen years ago this fragment appeared in the "*Revue Nationale*," I did not intend using the manuscripts, the translation of which forms the principal interest of this book. Youth has its reservations and egoisms, which middle-age condemns. Now that time and circumstances have modified my ideas and cancelled my scruples, I consider that I no longer possess any right to withhold certain writings, which, although

addressed to me, form none the less part of Heinrich Heine's works, and may, by completing the story of his life, increase the poet's fame.

THE LAST DAYS OF

HEINRICH HEINE.

I.

WHETHER it arose from a disregard of mere outward show, or rather from poverty overshadowing the household and necessitating strict economy, I know not; but certain it was, that at a period of "curios," when every artist arranged his home with due regard to comfort, if not to elegance, the poet's dwelling resembled third-rate furnished lodgings. Not a trace of good taste, no attempt even at comfort—a medley of furniture and articles recalling the barbarous fancy of that degenerate epoch when

mahogany was in vogue, and white-wood was relegated to the lumber-room.

When I first saw Heinrich Heine, he lived on the fifth floor of a house situated in the *Avenue Matignon*, not far from the *Rond-Point* of the *Champs Elysées*. His windows, overlooking the *Avenue*, opened on to a narrow balcony, covered in hot weather with a striped linen awning, such as appear in front of small *cafés*. The apartments consisted of three or four rooms —the dining-room and two rooms used by the master and the mistress of the house. A very low couch, behind a screen encased in wall-paper, several chairs, and opposite the door a walnut-wood secretary, formed the entire furniture of the invalid's chamber. I nearly forgot to mention two framed engravings, dating from the early years of Louis Philippe's reign—the "Reapers" and the

"Fisherman," after Leopold Robert. So far the arrangements of the rooms evidenced no trace of a woman's presence, which showed itself in the adjoining chamber by a display of imitation lace, lined with transparent yellow muslin, and corner-cupboards covered with brown velvet, and more especially by a full-length portrait, placed in a good light, of Mrs. Heine, with dress and hair as worn in her youth—a low-necked black bodice, and bands of hair plastered down her cheeks—a style in the fashion of about 1840.

II.

SHE by no means realised my ideal Mrs. Heine. I had fancied her refined, elegant, languishing, with a pale, earnest face, animated by large, perfidious velvety eyes. I saw, instead,

a homely, dark stout lady, with a high colour, and a jovial countenance, a person of whom you would say she required plenty of exercise in the open air. What a painful contrast between this robust woman and the pale dying man, who, with one foot already in the grave, summoned sufficient energy to earn not only enough for the daily bread, but money besides to purchase beautiful dresses. The melancholy jests, which obliging biographers constantly represent as flashes of wit from a husband too much in love, not to be profuse, never deluded anybody who visited that home. It is absurd to transform Mrs. Heine into an idyllic character, whilst the poet himself never dreamed of representing her in that guise. Why poetise at the expense of truth? especially when truth brings more honour to the poet's memory.

III.

WHATEVER may have been said to the contrary, he never showed himself selfish to any one. He was not to be believed when, assuming a Mephistophelian character, he broke forth into abuse of love and virtue. His mind, which people are pleased, and sometimes with truth, to decsribe as depraved, often revealed a refinement of feeling unknown to any poets deemed virtuous, and I doubt if even Schiller wrote anything more touching than the eight following lines—

"Emblem of a lovely flower,
So fair, so pure, so graceful art thou!
Silent I gaze and own thy power,
Thy presence brings me sadness now,
I feel the need to spread my hands
And o'er thy head a blessing call
From heaven, which eternal stands,
And shields the pure from sudden fall."

One can well understand the author of the above, whilst suffering agony, composing merry letters to comfort his infirm and aged mother; but one can also believe him capable of bitter raillery against those who, whilst pretending to like him, sought only to impose upon him. The following trait describes the degree of disinterestedness he attributed to servants supposed to be faithful. It happened about New-year's day that I praised the assiduous attentions of Catherine, one of the two servants, who acted as his nurse, and never left off the [1]"*serre-tête*" with which she probably sat as the model of "Dame Misfortune"—

"You forget," said Heine, "that this is New-year's week—that means the season of gratitude.

[1] A bandana handkerchief tied round the head and fastened with a knot.

Three days before and three days after the first of January. Sum-total, six days' consideration. Now do not run away with the idea that every servant is brutal and incapable of good feeling!"

IV.

BESIDES Catherine, the nurse with the "*serre-tête*," there was lame Pauline, a kind of friend, who filled the offices of companion and lady's maid; in fact, acted as a maid of all work. The intimates of the family—I will not say the "rest of the domesticity"—consisted of a secretary, a Saxon of good family, who had been implicated in the political events of 1849, and an old half-paralysed Jew who called himself Doctor Lœueve, living on the poet's bounty, and

entrusted by him with the management of the small system of secret police which he fancied he was bound to maintain.

The unremunerated visitors were nearly all of the same stamp—relics of the past, waifs of politics or love, members of that somewhat shady society which Heine wittily styled "*Le demi-monde princier.*" The Princess Belgiojoso, just returned from Broussa, visited the poet occasionally to complain of her sufferings from a ruined digestion which obliged her to partake only of iced food at midnight; the Princess W———, another wreck, from Weimar, redolent of tobacco, arrived, her hands full of small pamphlets in praise of the god of her adoration, who allowed her to have her own way.

I remember meeting besides, in that house, two women of the same time and the same set,

one of whom, an Englishwoman, Heine pointed out to me as the original of "Lady Matilda" in the "*Reisebilder*," and also the famous "Godmother" of "*L'enfant du siècle*," the chosen confidant of the lovers in her social circle, tiny Madame Jaubert, a diminutive woman, neat, well-gloved, and carrying a little umbrella which became in her small fingers an insignia, and made her resemble the symbol of "Genteel Comedy" under Louis Philippe.

V.

DWELLING, as well as its visitors, always bears an original and significant stamp. For me, all the poet's youth was mirrored in the wretchedness of his last days.

They betrayed traces of an unhealthy past, and a certain indescribable aroma of former Bohemianism, which recalled, at the same time, the laughter of grisettes and the exploits of pianists. *Montmorency* and the *Conservatoire*, the Gothic *prie-dieu* of the Princess Belgiojoso, and the policeman charged with moderating the antics of the fantastic ballet-dancers, whose leaders were called "*Rose Pompon*" and the "*Queen Pomaré*."

There is no doubt that the Bohemian often appears in the artist, but if the latter means to succeed in life, he ought to know how to assume and to abandon at will the rôle of the former. He ought especially to understand how to leave it at the door, when he comes home.

Customs are changed since Heine's time, and nobody knows better than the artists

of to-day how to assume the airs of respectability.

Probably Heine never knew the meaning we give to that word, and whatever they may say to the contrary, he remained quite ingenuously German, beneath the Voltairian disguise the French choose to ascribe to him. Not only had he fallen into all the sentimental absurdities of Louis Philippe's reign, but he even exaggerated them.

In spite of his objection to *Musset*, he at first took the character of "*Jenny l'ouvrière*" in earnest, he humbled himself before some titled humbug, confused great passions with small dissipations, and gave proof of his mistakes in some letters in which, believing he was sketching a spirited caricature, he painted a *genre* picture, which brings before us a man, already famous,

busy writing copy beside a woman mending shirts.

I have unfortunately every reason to believe that the poet had grown wiser when chance brought us together.

My somewhat cosmopolitan education and much travel had prepared me for this meeting.

Heine's poems formed the favourite study of my youth. I read his works in choice tomes given me by my mother. Thanks to Heinrich Heine's splendid descriptions, Nature seemed transformed for me into a terrestrial Paradise.

The poet's roughness did not alarm me. I liked him all the better for being decried. I felt, whilst defending him, that I was, in a way, defending myself; and, whilst entering the lists for my favourite poet, I prepared my own defence for the day, when I, like him, should

have to strive against the wickedness and folly of the world.

My profound admiration for the author of the "Book of Songs" could not fail to render him congenial to me, and, if I am not mistaken, he loved me especially on account of a certain similarity which he fancied to exist between us.

The horror of routine, of ugliness, of vulgarity, the hatred of expediency, the contempt for bombast, as well as for empty sentiments and phrases, before, and above all, an exceeding love of imagination, a fanatical adoration of the beautiful had revealed to him, in me, proofs of an independent spirit. He was pleased with me for not being common-place, and delighted in telling me so.

"Our minds," said he, "are akin, and that is why I need conceal nothing from you!"

VI.

THE first letter he wrote to me proves that, from the beginning of our acquaintance, perfect confidence existed between Heinrich Heine and myself.

"VERY CHARMING AND AMIABLE LADY,

"I much regret seeing so little of you the other day. You made a most favourable impression upon me, and I feel a great desire to meet you again. Come to-morrow, if possible, at all events, as soon as you can. I am ready to receive you at any time. But I should prefer after four o'clock, until . . . as late as you please. I write to you myself, in spite of my weak eyes, because I have no private secretary just now. I

am beset by many painful reports, and am still very ill. I know not why your warm sympathy does me so much good, superstitious being that I am! I fancy that a good fairy has visited me in the hour of affliction. But if the fairy is good, the hour must be propitious! Or are you perchance a wicked fairy? I intend speedily to verify the matter.

"Yours,

"HEINRICH HEINE."

He submitted to the influence that one discerning mind exercises over another. As he said himself, I had come to him "opportunely in fact, just when I was needed." How often affections are nipped in the bud, because people fail to seize the right moment. When, after the lapse of so many years, and the formation of

many new friendships, I try to recall the incidents of the time Heinrich Heine and I spent together, I remember especially a great mutual affection; also, an intellectual sympathy, which always remained the same, and was never debased by the admixture of any common-place sentiment. Not a shadow of conceit or vanity on either side. Having formed our opinion, one of the other, on the spot, all was settled, excused, and forgiven beforehand. No possible misunderstanding could arise; we showed ourselves sincere, without fear of seeming false, which added much to the charm of our mutual intercourse, and gave it a something, refined, and *sui generis*, which impressed the most casual observers, and inspired respect to all.

He said "*tu*" (thou) to me from the first, which made me feel as if I had always known

him. He treated me like a relative; therefore I tried to assume that part towards him.

The absence of his secretary, Mr. de Zichlinsky, who fell ill, and had no successor, enabled me to give a useful purpose to my visits. Heine liked to make use of what he called the little talents of his "Fly." He gave me this nickname in reference to the device on my seal. But to return to my duties as secretary *ad interim!* Sometimes he gave me to address the letters he wrote to his mother, "the poor old woman," sometimes I corrected the proofs of the French edition of the "*Reisebilder*." A laborious task, for I was a novice at literary work, and I had to rectify a text, interlarded with barbarisms and impossible phrases. At other times, Heine availed himself of my knowledge of German to dictate letters which he found painful to write

himself, and I do not think I am betraying confidence by alluding to one of them, which I am sure the Rothschild family preserves in its archives. I mean an epistle written after the death of its chief, and which, under the form of condolence, contains a grand and touching description of the Jewish mourning. It was in reference to that particular letter penned by me, of which Heine considered the caligraphy imperfect, that he calls himself the "Schoolmaster," a term recurring in various notes, he wrote to me:—

"No school to-day, for the schoolmaster is not yet *curé*—(bad French) cured—as says old Mme. Liszt. Therefore I must dispense with you. But pray let me know if you can come to-morrow (Monday). My head aches, and it

would be selfish to let you call without being able to talk to you.

"Awaiting your reply,

"I remain, dear Fly,

"Your most doting,

"H. H."

He seemed especially disgusted at the incorrect shape of my capitals, and I fancy I can still see "*l'enfant terrible*" of poetry, the pitiless banterer, raising with one finger his paralysed eyelid, the better to discern the faults of my writing, and to trace a copy for me. He treated leniently that kind of failing, but bunglers rarely, if ever, escaped his wrath, and I heard him once discharge a volley of bitter raillery against a silly friend of his in Germany, who, wishing to appear literary, had conceived

the mistaken idea of interlarding his letter to the poet, with quotations from Schiller.

Schiller, in an epistle to Heinrich Heine; and, moreover, in a business letter! He could not forget it, and expressed his displeasure by one of those sallies frequent with him.

"That's good, as if he fancied that I care for Schiller"! he cried indignantly. His smile completed the meaning of his exclamation. He evidently alluded to that stock of incorrigible silliness which adheres like a hereditary curse to the Philistine of every rank in all countries. For my part, I discovered spite where Heine only perceived stupidity. The fascinating artist, the discerning critic, who could not forgive his fellow-countryman for treating him so inconsiderately, forgot that people never raise statues to those who call them stupid and "*bourgeois*."

VII.

DID he want to know how I should tide over a difficulty, and convince himself that my mind continued to harmonise with his own? Whether prompted by mere curiosity, or by a desire to associate me with him in all his work, he talked to me fully about his intended translations. The point in question was to find melodious and appropriate expressions in French to initiate the readers of the "*Revue des deux Mondes*" in a masterpiece which, under the title of "New Spring," describes so exactly the feelings of a heart passing from the coldness of a worn-out love, to the fresh delights of a new one. He wished, he said, to compare my French version with that of his usual translators, and to correct their work by mine. I then attached so

little importance to my ideas that, by some strange oversight, I never thought of procuring the number of the "*Revue des deux Mondes*" containing that fragment of my first literary effort. I was perfectly contented with having helped my friend; I wished for no more.

VIII.

WHENEVER I read aloud to him, he made many interesting remarks. My style of reading German pleased him, for he considered it unaffected, simple, and well suited to the genius of a language which, of all others, he deemed not only the most beautiful, but also the most melodious. He thought French more terse than elegant, therefore unsuited to poetry,

and quite incapable of expressing certain innermost feelings. We all know his dislike to Victor Hugo, and Alfred de Musset pleased him no better. "It is prose in rhyme," he exclaimed one day, when I thought to gratify him by reading "*Mardoché*."

Though he failed to admire our poets, he at least delighted in our novelists, beginning with Alexandre Dumas the elder, whose animation, mirth, and marvellous imagination he praised incessantly. How often he quoted the "*Trois Mousquetaires*" as a model of the style of writing intended to refresh and divert the mind! Amongst those modern writers who, according to him, excelled in the art of amusing and attracting the reader, he frequently cited an author forgotten at the present day—I mean Charles Rabou, and his novel, "*Le pauvre de*

Montléry." The novels called "philosophical" pleased him less, and without denying George Sand's wonderful talent, Heine never expressed much enthusiasm for her. Quite unlike most of her admirers, who declare her to possess a masculine style and a manly spirit, he dwelt at length on the eminently feminine bent of her thoughts, and consequently of her writings. The philosophical mind which the great-grand-daughter of Aurora de Königsmark probably inherited from her German origin, failed, in Heine's opinion, to rectify those weaknesses of a judgment in which he discovered all a woman's waywardness. According to Heine, the diffuseness of her speeches, the magniloquence of her arguments, and, above all, the sameness of her subjects and the unreality of her characters, constantly revealed the sex of the writer in George Sand. He did

not admire her mind in the abstract; he reproached her with a fault common to most lady-novelists — the impossibility of separating the woman from the artist, in other words, of remaining neutral in her works. He also blamed that want of judgment which impels George Sand, like several of her predecessors, to justify her principles by her writings, or rather to transform her principles into personages. To sum up his opinion about her, he did not fear to apply the term blue stocking, and when I exclaimed against it, he added, "Let us say red stocking!" Every superior mind becomes despotic, and the reader must not be surprised if the artist, the poet who formulated the most splendid descriptions in the simplest words, could not admire writings composed of high-flown eloquence. Besides, Heine was too clever to believe in novels

intended to reform society. He considered it the specialty of a true artist, whether novelist, poet, or dramatic author, to produce poetry by copying nature.

After all, nothing more could be expected of him; the first to solve this magnificent problem was Shakespeare. Of him, Heine always spoke with the greatest admiration.

"See," he used to say, "God holds by right the first place, but the second undoubtedly belongs to Shakespeare!"

IX.

READING aloud to invalids wearies them. Sometimes he begged me to stop. He then put out his arm, and with his eyes almost

closed he asked me to place my hand in his. For him, he said, it was a means of becoming again linked to that life which was slipping away from him. Whilst thus speaking, the sound of his voice grew strangely eager, and his fingers entwined round mine, which he pressed as if it lay in my power to keep him in this world. In the hope of making him forget such painful thoughts, I tried to lead him back to the past, and endeavoured to induce him to relate some details of his student life, or one of those anecdotes reflecting so truly the narrator's mind. The style in which he entertained me about his sojourn at Bonn, recalled Gœthe's immortal volume, "*Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre.*" What vivacity in the descriptions of this other Wilhelm Meister! What flashes of satire leaped forth when he sought to introduce me into the midst

of those "*Burschenschaften*" to which he had belonged! I mentioned the "*Lehrjahre*," but it is rather in the middle ages, in certain pages of Victor Hugo's "*Notre Dame de Paris*," that we must seek for pictures analogous to those which Heine described to me. The students that figured in those sketches reminded me of the agitated, yet pedantic world of scholars in olden times. No great passions, but many petty love affairs, many hours wasted in drinking, in idle discussions; jests, more or less good, upon all existent and non-existent subjects; no great desire to acquire knowledge. On the other hand, broken glasses, hiccoughs, duels, brawls, and perhaps even sighs. In fact, every conceivable and inconceivable folly, all the absurdities that arise in a student's mind, one of those students of true Teutonic race, who, under pretext of seeking the

explanation of things and of examining themselves, spend their days in dreaming, their nights in feasting, and finally advance towards the "Unknown" which disturbs their convictions and confuses their calculations, stopping meanwhile at every house where love or beer is retailed.

At the period of which Heine spoke, politics, by which the public-house keepers throve, excited the minds of the middle-class students. They organised pic-nics and marched in troops, singing patriotic songs, to one of the ruins overlooking the Rhine. There, dominating the ancient river, where the luscious vineyards extend right and left, and in the shade of dungeons where the buzzard succeeds the "*Burg-graf*" of former days, they indulged in harmless manifestations against despotic tyranny. The empty provision-hamper was the signal for speeches to commence,

but very often the faltering tongue of the orator vainly sought for rousing expressions. He got through it as well as he could. One day, for instance, when the cloth being laid on the "*Drachenfels*," in the shelter of an old tower once the lair of a titled rascal, a guest, feeling his tongue very thick, proposed, instead of a speech, to make a bonfire of the dungeon. The suggestion was received with frantic acclamations, and after deciding that "union is strength," and also that the "maintaining of the rights of man implies certain ideas of superiority and manliness irresistible to the weaker sex," they proceeded to set the improvised pyre alight with their torches. The tower soon blazed away merrily, but the authorities, who never had a crow to pick with despots, and could not understand the object of destroying a picturesque ruin,

considered the joke a bad one. The students felt compelled to renounce any further bonfires, and of all that story in which the poet played a part, he kept especially in mind a severe attack of bronchitis which cured him for ever of all desire to share in popular demonstrations.

Another scene witnessed by Heinrich Heine described perhaps still better the outrageously bad manners of the style of person who spends his life seated at table in pot-houses, and takes a pride in his folly until he can boast of his learning. It occurred at M. de Savigny's, Professor of Jurisprudence and a celebrated lawyer. The student in question, who came, according to custom in German Universities, to enter his name for the Professor's lectures, appeared in his dressing-gown, his cap over one ear, and exhaling an odour of tobacco from a pipe, of which the long

stem, adorned with a tassel, peeped out of a greasy pocket. He entered simpering, but one look of M. de Savigny's stopped him at the door. "Does that dressing-gown form your entire wardrobe?" asked the Professor severely. The malapert, in a rage, brazened it out, and answered that not only did he possess other garments, but a perfectly new coat besides. A significant gesture of M. de Savigny's cut this enumeration short. "Well then, go home and dress yourself, and then come and speak to me!"

X.

THE doctor having ordered me to take the waters at Wildbad, in the Black Forest, I was obliged to interrupt my visits for a time.

The prospect of this separation distressed the invalid. I was abandoning him, and for Germany. Alas! to be able to accompany me and to do as he liked for a last time, to seek in vain for some one to exclaim, "Arise and walk!"

With his head on his pillows, he seemed to be dreaming.

I fancied he saw the Black Forest penetrated with the summer heat, on the high mountain, the sun-clad fir plantation, the solemn avenue of trees, the blue sky behind the shady domes, the feathery ferns waving above the yellow mosses, the undulating shadows of the grasses; then, lower down, under an azure canopy, the unalterable freshness of an idyllic landscape, rustic cottages sparkling light upon the babbling wavelets, flowers opening beneath a glittering dust, the wild ravine illumined by a ray of sunshine.

Heine remained silent; I was mutely gazing at the motes dancing in the air. The oppressive heat entered through the open window; in the next room two quarrelsome voices were raised in dispute. A deep sigh escaped the patient. Tears filled my eyes, and I deemed it egotistical on my part to care for my health, when he had so short a time to live.

XI.

"GENTLEST of [1] '*fines mouches!*' Or rather, putting aside the emblem on your seal, ought I not to name you after the perfume of

---

[1] Evidently a pun on the expression "fine mouche," sly boots, and the device on her seal.

your letter. In that case, I must say, the most graceful of [1] musk-cats, I received your missive the day before yesterday and the '*pattes de mouches*' keep running in my head, perhaps even in my heart. My most grateful thanks for all the affection you show me. The translation of the poems is very fine, and I repeat what I said before you left. I rejoice also, at the thought of beholding you soon again, and of placing [2] '*une empreinte vivante*' on the sweet and slightly suabian features. Ah! that sentence would bear a less platonic meaning if I were still a man! But I am only a spirit now, a fact which may suit *you* but scarcely satisfies me! The French edition

[1] Also a pun, "Chatte Musquée," meaning a dainty, charming, woman, as well as a musk-cat.

[2] "A living impress." These words which recur often in Heine's letters to me, are meant in allusion to an expression I once used, and are written in French in the original text.

of my poems has just come out, and is all the rage; but the poems hitherto unpublished, for instance, 'The Return of Spring,' will appear in two or three months' time, in one of the last volumes of the French edition. You will perceive that no time has been lost.

"Yes! I shall be delighted to see you again, my well-beloved '*fine mouche*' of my soul. The most graceful of '*chats musqués*,' as gentle as an angora cat, the kind I always preferred. For some time I loved tiger-cats, but they are too dangerous, and the living impress they sometimes left on my face was unpleasant. I am still very ill, constant annoyances and fits of passion rage against my state of health, which is hopeless. A dying man, thirsting for the wildest joys that life can offer. It is dreadful! Fare-

well! May the waters strengthen and do you good.

"Most affectionate greeting from your friend,

"H. H."

"PARIS, *July 20th*, 1855.

[1] "MY DEAR FRIEND,

"You are in Paris, and yet you delay coming to shake hands with me. I long to inhale the musk of your gloves, to hear the sound of your voice, to make a living impression on your [2] Suabian face. Do not be angry, although so graceful you have a Suabian 'Gelbveiglein.' Come soon.

"Yours ever,

"H. HEINÉ.

---

[1] This letter was written originally in French.

[2] Suabian face, a German idiomatic expression for a good-natured face.

He always accentuated the final letter of his name when writing it in French.

XII.

IT is easy to discover by the preceding pages, as well as by the letters he forwarded to me at Wildbad and the note awaiting my return to Paris, a certainty that his mind was then tolerably calm. He seemed pleased at the publication of his poems and "*Reisebilder*" in French.

The improvement caused by the introduction of what is called the realistic into literature, has made us exacting with regard to composition, and we scarcely approve of those desultory works where the author, relying upon the proverbial

good-nature of the reader, takes him right and left, without knowing where he will land him, not even when the beauty of the excursion justifies its length.

The personal impressions of a writer such as the author of the "*Reisebilder*" excels in describing have become almost obsolete at the present day. Disconnected as it is, composed of fragments resembling in form the fly-leaves of an album, still the book will always be considered one of Heinrich Heine's best works. Here, contrary to his custom, and as in one of his most beautiful poems, you perceive that the author is unconstrained, that he writes to please himself, without caring for praise or censure, you feel that his troubles are forgotten in the intense pleasure of escaping from close connection with human folly and of avoiding the contemptible society of

people reputed proper to inhale freely the mountain air. What sensations of pure joy, of freedom, what indulgence in voluptuousness, appear in these scenes full of air and of space, where the poet, painter, and great artist, sketches in turn the picturesque summits upon which Gœthe placed his saturnalia, and the pathetically calm landscapes of beautiful southern climes. Certainly few artists and writers, I will not say saw less, but travelled less than Heine. A single trip to London, one sea-voyage, an expedition to the Hartz Mountains, an attempted journey to Italy, one season at Bagnères in the Pyrenees, form pretty nearly the entire basis of his resources as a describer of scenery. But which of our brilliant writers of modern times has succeeded in describing better or so vividly the physiognomy and the colouring of a landscape? Let us take

for instance his pages on Italy, a country about which endless nonsense and lies have been written. Travellers and literary men, filled with an exaggerated idea of their own superiority, who pass six weeks in Italy, with the object of bringing out a book, generally possess the prejudices of the foreigner who is annoyed at failing to meet elsewhere with what pleases him at home. Thus the Innkeeper, determined to regulate the amount of his bill according to the manners of his guest, the little Italian girl who yields without any previous hypocritical coyness, are transformed by the pen of the said travellers into types of baseness and meanness. In like manner, they only see a low-class comedian in the little half-naked beggar who dances on the Chiaja at Naples, and in the pretty Monsignor, who covered with lace

enhances the pomp of the great religious ceremonies.

They do not examine, they merely draw comparisons, without allowing for the differences of temperament, of climate, of education, and of character; they ridicule manners and customs, because they differ from those of their native land. The mean curiosity of authors who travel for the sake of making money at the expense of a nation which they affect to despise frequently results in erroneous descriptions. Many of these accounts treat of the museums, besides the treasures and antiquities, which enrich Italy, without revealing her idiosyncracies. These people seem to ignore that a work of art is after all of little account if they possess not the secret of the sentiment that created it. This sentiment is revealed in every page of the "*Reisebilder*."

Setting aside all consideration of the greater or less value of the plan of the work, the "*Reise-bilder*" is a *chef-d'œuvre*, and until now, the only book capable of giving the delicious vision of that terrestial paradise of which Gœthe's "*Mignon*" deserves to be called the "*Eve*." What a difference however between the ancient and classical Italy of the great German classic writer and the young and smiling Italy of the Jewish poet!

The powerful poetical imagination of the Son of Israel creates personages suited to the character of the landscape. Italy, in his pictures, is no longer a vast and magnificent cemetery, where cypress trees overshadow the marbles, but a fairy-garden, an enchanted land, where a priestess, under the form of the most beautiful of dancers, cele-

brates continuously the eternal festival of Youth and Love.

Gœthe, when describing Italy in his "Roman Elegies," carves a noble bas-relief; Byron and Lamartine take up their lyres to compose a hymn. Heine grasps not the chisel, nor does he touch the lyre in honour of the country he loves, but in prose alone he limns a wonderful picture, and so beautiful is it, that we are tempted to doubt whether the original equals his description.

Let others lead their readers amidst rows of paintings and statues, Henrich Heine calls up living images of Dante's birth-place. The convent containing religious frescoes descriptive of holy miracles, the shady fir trees on the heights of Fiesole, where the tourist pauses to contemplate Florence peacefully basking under the azure sky, the narrow horizon of the hills,

which, like certain back-grounds in favour with the [1] "*primitifs*," is framed in the ogive arch of a cloister gilded by the setting sun, the painted *loggia* of the palace, where in the evening is heard the laughter of pale, beautiful women, the holy Madonna with her shining halo, causing the passer-by to dream of a virgin's love; the deserted gardens where marbles intermingled with the laurels and myrtles reproduce mythological scenes, the calm night illumined by the flitting of the fire-flies amidst the foliage of the lemon trees, the noisy darkness filled with masked figures, the emblazoned sanctuary where prayer assumes passionate and amorous formulas; all this assemblage of animated and living objects which form the picture of a beautiful

[1] A French school existing in Heine's day, corresponding to our pre-Raphaelites.

country and the soul of a brilliant nation pass before us in the few immortal pages which the poet devotes to Italy in his "*Reisebilder*." To make his description more complete, he has drawn the reverse of the medal and placed caricature beside the likeness. The heavy Jewish financier, who, wishing to appear well read, quotes poetry on the setting sun when it is rising, the English protestant lady who believes herself witty when making fun of Italian predilections, are very successful and pithy specimens of those inevitable bores, who, finding it dull at home, are unfortunately rich enough to indulge the privilege of annoying others abroad, by obtruding themselves upon good honest folks, whom they are bound to despise by reason of the prejudices belonging to their country and their religion.

XIII.

I HAVE returned from Wildbad, and am again beside the sick man's couch. His strength diminishes visibly; all that he addresses to me henceforth, whether in prose or verse, reveals his increased depression and sadness. Here are some of his notes, and although they afford but little literary interest, yet they give a correct idea of the physical and mental sufferings he endured:—

"My dear Soul,

"My mind is so harassed, I scarcely know whether I asked you to come to-day, Thursday, or only to-morrow, Friday. I am so unwell to-day, that to make assurance doubly sure, let us appoint next Saturday for your dear visit. I shall depend upon you then. Come soon. I take advantage of

this opportunity to transmit the manuscript of the poems, and please kindly bring it back when read, so that you may, when perusing it with me, acquaint me with any improvements you may deem expedient. Dear and beloved creature! I am very ill and quite as bad morally as physically. German loyalty and probity are treating me most shamefully. I press the lotus-flower to my heart and remain her devoted,

"H. H.

"*Thursday.*"

"*Friday, January* 11*th,* 1856.

"DEAR CHILD,

"To-day, I have a dreadful nervous headache, which may last, I fear, over to-morrow, or may even increase. I hasten to let you know

that there will be no school to-morrow, and you can dispose of your afternoon according to your fancy. But I expect you the next day, Sunday. If you should not be able to come, my dear gentle child, let me know. You need fear no beating from me, even if you deserved such a punishment for great stupidity—for to handle the rod requires more strength than I possess.

"I am oppressed, suffering, and sad.

"Kiss the [1] '*pattes de mouche.*'

"Your friend,

"H. H.

"I think incessantly of the *mouche*, but do not wish to see her to-day, Tuesday, nor even to-

[1] A double-*entendre*, "*pattes de mouche*," signifying "a scrawl," as well as fly's feet, in allusion to "*fine mouche.*"

morrow. I am very ill, but Thursday, I shall hope to see the dearest of *mouches.*

"I cannot distinguish what I write.

"H. H."

"*Tuesday.*

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I am still very ill, and cannot receive you to-day. But I trust you will manage to come to-morrow, Sunday. Send me a line in case you are obliged to defer your visit until the day after to-morrow.

"Your poor friend,

"NABUCHADNEZZAR II.,

"For I am as insane as the King of Babylon, and only eat minced grass, called by my cook Spinach."

"My Very Dear and Gracious Darling,

"I do not ask you to visit me to-morrow, Wednesday, for I feel a headache coming on, but if you could spare me a few moments on Friday afternoon, it would be some compensation for not having set eyes on you for so long.

"After Friday, all days will suit me equally well to welcome you, and the oftener you call, the happier I shall be. My good, my gracious, and "*fine mouche*," come and buzz around my nose with your little wings. I know a song of Mendelssohn's, of which the burden is: 'Come soon!' That melody haunts me continually, 'Come soon.' I kiss the two dear paws not together, but one after the other. Adieu.

"H. H."

"DEAR CREATURE,

"I have a dreadful headache to-day and dread the consequences for to-morrow. I therefore must beg you not to visit me to-morrow, Sunday, but on Monday instead, unless business brings you into this neighbourhood, when you might call at your risk and peril to see me. I have a great desire to behold you again, last flower of my mournful autumn, beloved madcap.

"I remain, with doting fondness,

"Your devoted,

"H. H.

"I must use at once the pretty envelopes and kiss the beloved paw that has addressed them so nicely. I passed a bad night, my cough worried me incessantly, and I cannot speak.

Thanks likewise for the exquisite copy of the letter to Madame de R.

"Greeting and love. I grin with pain, I gnash my teeth, I grow mad

"H. H."

"DEAR 'MOUCHE,'

"I am still overwhelmed by a headache, certain to last until to-morrow, Wednesday. I cannot therefore hope to see my beloved '*mouche*' before Thursday. How vexatious! I am so ill! [1] '*My brain is full of madness and my heart is full of sorrow!*' Never was poet more miserable amidst the complete happiness which seems to mock him. I place a living impression upon all your charms, but only in imagination.

[1] In English in the original.

Imagination is all I can offer you, [1] '*poor girl.*' *Au revoir.*

"H. H.

"*Tuesday, noon.*"

"BELOVED 'MOUCHE,'

"I have spent a very bad night groaning, and am well-nigh dispirited.

"I expect to hear you buzz about me to-morrow. I am, besides, as sentimental as a pug-dog in love for the first time. Could I but pour out all this sentimentality over Mme. Koreff's charms! But destiny refuses me even that satisfaction. You understand nothing of the above, for you are a goose.

"Your gosling,

"GOSLIN I.,
"King of the Vandals."

---

[1] In English in the original.

"DEAR GENTLE FRIEND,

"Thanks for your affectionate note. I am glad to hear that you are well. As for me, alas! I am still very ill, weak, and restless, often affected to tears by the least annoyance, by the smallest trick that Dame Fortune plays me. Every invalid is a poor fool; I do not like to be seen in so pitiful a plight. But what does it signify? For all that, I must hear my Fly buzz. Come very soon! As soon you please, Madam, or sooner even, pray understand that. I mean as soon as possible, my dear, my beloved little being. I have scrawled the poem I forward you, pure [1] *Chærentonesque* poetry: A madman to a madcap.

"H. H."

[1] Chærenton—The French Bedlam.

"PARIS, *August 15th.*

"DEAR LADY,

"I wrote the above few lines to you yesterday, but did not send them. I was too ill. To-day, I learn, with sincere regret, that you called yesterday, and I hasten to write and beg you to repeat your visit very, very soon. I am much better. A thousand thanks for the poems, but I have not yet read them.

"Yours most lovingly,

"H. H.

"My '*fine mouche's*' visit did me good yesterday. I think incessantly of the best, the most charming, the most agreeable of '*fines mouches.*' But I shall not see her, till the day after to-morrow. What an eternity to wait. I might easily die a hundred deaths meanwhile.

"Think a little of me, small ganz (goose).

"You very humble servant,

"HANS.

"*Tuesday.*"

The following letter was originally written in French :—

"MY DEAR CHILD,

"I am no longer ailing but simply bored, for, during the last two days, workmen have been busy putting an awning, with which I could dispense, over my window. I read your little manuscript over and over again with infinite pleasure. We must discuss it. Come if you can to-morrow. I long to see you once more, and think constantly of my '*fine mouche.*'

"H. HEINE.

"*Thursday Morning.*"

"AMIABLE FRIEND,

"I am so ill to-day that I fear there will be but little improvement to-morrow. Thus I am compelled to ask you to defer your visit till Saturday or Sunday. Your veil is quite safe, carefully folded on my Secretary. I love you with the tenderness of a dying man; that means, most tenderly.

"H. H.

Tuesday."

"*Sunday, September 30th,* 1855.

"DEAR HEART,

"The weather is bad, and I am as bad as the weather. I will not expose my lotus-flower to the inclemency of these gloomy fogs. Ah! how I long to transform this miser-

able day into one of those radiant Indian mornings such as are found on the banks of the Ganges, and prove so congenial to lotus-blossoms. Come soon, but not to-day. I shall expect you on Wednesday afternoon. I hope this arrangement will suit you. I place, &c.

"H. HEINE."

"DEAREST,

"I am ailing and fear the indisposition will last a couple of days. I hasten to let you know that I shall be able to see you only in the middle of the week, so as not to spoil our interview by a headache.

"Ever loving and faithful,

"H. H.

"*Sunday Morning.*"

"DEAR SOUL,

"I am very unwell and very much vexed. My right eyelid, following the bad example of its neighbour, can no longer keep open. I can scarcely write. But I love you dearly, and think of you, my darling! The story did not bore me, and promises well for the future. You are not such a fool as you look, but you are charming beyond expression, and that has a great attraction for me. Shall I see you to-morrow? I do not know; for, if I continued unwell, you might receive a countermand.

"I feel myself mastered by a snivelling temper. My heart yawns spasmodically. I wish I were dead, or a pug-dog in health needing no medicine.

"Misery, thy name is

"HEINRICH HEINE."

"DEAR SOUL,

"I am very miserable. I coughed dreadfully for twenty-four hours; my head is wracked with pain. I fear it will continue to ache to-morrow. That is why I ask my beloved to defer her visit arranged for Thursday till Friday. My [1] Serinski has just sent word that he is ill and cannot come at all this week. What provoking disappointments, what an awkward situation in which to be placed! I intend complaining of Providence, who acts so unkindly towards me, before the 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.' I shall expect you on Friday; meanwhile I kiss in imagination '*les petites pattes de mouche*.'

"Your foolish,

"H. H."

[1] M. de Zichlinsky, his Secretary.

XIV.

HE is very bad, and keeps himself up by his energetic will alone, and by an ardent desire to conclude editing his Memoirs intended to complete his works and to vindicate his actions. The reader is aware that serious obstacles arose to prevent the publication of that curious document, and the defence as well as the prosecution will remain secret. I can scarcely say it is to be regretted. The object of a book ought to be to instruct rather than to insult. Besides, after a time tittle-tattle and personal attacks cease to interest. The greater portion of the public, caring but little for people most of whom have disappeared from the scene, only perceives the meanness of such quarrels, and rightly asks if there is really any reason for

defence when nobody thinks of bringing an accusation. There remain the friends and relatives of the poet, who especially deplore the uselessness of a work that undoubtedly shortened the writer's life. How often I found Heine covering large sheets of blank paper scattered before him with his firm writing, betraying the boldness and clearness of his thoughts! The pencil wandered with feverish haste over the pages, and assumed, when wielded by the poet's taper fingers, the sharpness of a murderous weapon, apparently injuring spotless reputations. One day, instead of the scratching of the pencil, I heard a cruel laugh, the laugh of satiated revenge. I looked at Heinrich Heine. "I have them," said he; "dead or living they shall not escape. Let him who has attacked me beware when he reads this. Heine does not die like the first best

man, and the tiger's claws shall survive the tiger himself!"

XV.

THANK Heaven, neither his claws, nor his hatred, nor even the remembrance of the errors and faults he may have committed, have survived Heinrich Heine, but only the undying beauty of his language, the matchless grace of the pictures he evoked!

To take him as a whole, what contrasts in his talents, and what contrasts in his life! The most dreamily delicate mind, the most sentimental, the most German, at the same time a dreadfully ironical wit, wickedly sensual, and thoroughly Parisian.

His style was sometimes as simple as an old

popular ballad; at others, refined, extravagant, and complex, like a fanciful modern "*feuilleton*." A pagan genius who sculptures Greek godesses to such perfection that they seem carved out of the finest Parian marble, a Christian imagination which paints dolorous virgins such as those relegated to the shades of sombre old cloisters by the rigid bonds of sorrow, a constant yearning towards classic Greece and towards the free, material, expansive, and happy life as represented by Plato and Phidias, at the same time a constant return to the stiff, mystical figures which Albert Dürer and William of Cologne have piously reproduced in their engravings.

Besides all that, flights towards all civilisations,—Spain, Persia, Italy, and especially Brahminical India, and its divine rivers filled with blooming lotus, where the scorching sun and the

teeming vegetation alone appear capable of realising the intensity and fertility of his dreams.

If from that resplendent world which moved in his mind, we descend to the actions and sentiments of his life, the contrasts are no less striking. He is a Jew brought up by a free-thinking mother, he was born in a protestant country, and went to school at a Jesuit College. He was proud, active, athirst for independence, and his Jewish origin subjected him to many slights, whilst his poverty kept him in durance vile and reduced him to a meagre pittance. He was German to the core, and lived in poverty far from his country. He adored liberty, but the love of controversy raised him into a pangyrist of Napoleon.

He was agitated by the passionate vehemence of immoderate desires and of the most vivid

imaginings, and he spent ten years bed-ridden and paralysed, obliged, in order to open his eye, to raise the lid with his finger.

His life was always in extremes, whilst Gœthe's was ever well-balanced, and his work resembles a little flask of Oriental perfumes, both too choice and too strong, which over-excite our feelings and exhaust our senses.

XVI.

HE loved, in the course of our chats, to dwell upon the various incidents of his childhood. I never heard him speak of his people but with affection and gratitude. This man, though so much abused, possessed wonderful tenderness, and loved, with boundless regard,

those who were kind to him. Ill, half-blind, and almost on the eve of death, he indited, with divine artifice, merry letters to comfort his mother. He never exposed her to public criticism, and rarely mentioned her revered name. He might, however, have testified, without apprehension, to all she had done for him. She gave him his earliest intellectual sustenance, and he drew from her conversation, as well as from her blood, both originality and power.

Mistress Betty Heine, born von Geldern, and daughter of an eminent Jewish physician, had received one of those grand scientific and literary educations which some families in the last century bestowed upon their daughters. She was an excellent logician, and in this at least anything but German. She attached great importance to precision of words, and described

magniloquence as a sure means of becoming ridiculous and offensive. She did not approve of the sentimentality of the day. By the natural soundness of her mind she was French, but French only in that. Belonging to a great Jewish family, she loved the people. The Jews remaining aliens and foreigners amidst Christian nations, readily became cosmopolitan and liberal. After having loved France in her great authors, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, she loved her, or at least she submitted to her, when she beheld her in arms and supreme in her native land. Properly speaking, why should Mistress Heine be Prussian? What patriotism could be reasonably expected from a woman whose religion and race were oppressed by the falling Government? Her people and her religion formed her country, and they found better protection under French

liberalism than beneath German pedantry. The Emperor Napoleon I. had extended France to the banks of the Rhine. The houses, transformed for the nonce into inns, were thrown open to the gay and brilliant soldiers, who aspired to the conquests of countries and hearts. Mistress Heine placed her house at their disposal. In her they found a generous hostess, who only required them in return, to speak French to her children. Need I say how readily they granted her request? An *abbé émigré*, a jolly drummer of the early wars of the "*Directoire*," undertook to teach French to the embryo poet; the plan succeeded admirably, if we judge of it by the progress he made. Not only did he learn French, but he appreciated it, he seized the spirit of the language, he penetrated the character of the men who spoke it,

He saw, *per contra*, a thing few Germans dare hardly suspect—I mean the distance between a heavy and a lively style, how tedious tedium must always prove, how pleasing is pleasantness.

His French tutors tried to teach him history, but he did not progress at all; especially in Roman history his blunders were many, and he invariably confused the histories of Rome and of France, above all with regard to the Cæsars (and that to the end of his days); a natural enough error, if we consider the language in which he was forced to repeat his lesson. From Cæsar to the other divinities of Olympus there was no great distance, and for the child all those people were equally resplendent, and hurled thunderbolts. He ascended only too willingly into Olympus, stopped from choice before dame Venus; and many a time, if we are to believe

him, he neglected his exercise to ponder over the beautiful goddess's adventures, and to study her profile and full face. "I knew," said he, "her catechism better than any scholar of ancient Rome!" This did not prevent him, however, from casting occasionally an imploring look, may be ironically, at a representation of Christ delivered up to the scourge of his tormentors. It was placed under the arches of the old cloister, apparently as a warning to idle scholars.

XVII.

THESE charming anecdotes which revealed so much of the inmost recesses of a refined mind, became unfortunately few and far between.

Even with me at hand, he sometimes abandoned himself to those sad reveries when the souls of the sick apparently wander away into unknown and gloomy space. Occasionally, on recovering from this drowsiness, he uttered prolonged groans of despair, or he tried to laugh at some improper story, some ribald saying, which seemed to be borrowed from the coarser passages of ancient Jewish history; he appeared to repeat them inwardly. Unexpected, strange, and poetical words arose like roses from a heap of rubbish, and attracted me anew to the poet, when I was on the point of forsaking, almost against any will, the sensualist, the refined libertine, and sceptic. One day, perceiving that he alarmed me, he stretched out his arm, took hold of mine, and pressed it violently. "Forgive me," he said, "it will soon be over. It is the

fault of approaching death. It draws near rapidly, and when I feel it quite close to me, I must cling to life, if only by a rotten beam!"

He spoke in a whisper, and his hollow voice seemed to issue from the mouth of a corpse, or rather from the pallid lips of one of those vampires which, according to the uncanny Hungarian legend, quit the tomb, and visit at night the abodes of the living to rob them of the strength the vampire needs to re-animate its dead body.

XVIII.

ONE day I arrived at Heine's, my mind full of the "Confessions of St. Augustine," which I then read for the first time,

and with an enthusiasm that could not fail to cause him to smile. His satirical look confused me, and I asked him if he did not consider the book interesting.

"Oh! charming certainly, that is, until his conversion!" he replied in that clear and vibrating tone which I shall never forget, for its emphasis alone implied raillery. He did not always jest, however, and at certain moments he tried to guess at the future through the thick veil of the present. A man is more inclined to be sceptical, when he is well and happy. When his sufferings increased, Heine often told me of a sudden impulse constraining him to stretch out his arms towards heaven and to crave for mercy. He experienced this feeling, especially during those endless nocturnal insomnia when the dream of vanished pleasures blended

with the bitter recollection of injustice undergone and insults received—a deplorable condition, when delirium, bringing before him in turns pleasant pictures and threatening faces, caused him sometimes to cry out, and at other times to sigh.

Often, as I said before, he fancied himself again a child in his paternal home, and began life anew, smiling on those dear forms who had always received him so tenderly.

Once, when awakening from a long slumber, he told me he had dreamt about his father. "He was having his hair dressed, and I perceived him through a cloud of powder. Delighted at seeing him again, I tried to rush into his arms. But, strange to say, as I drew nearer, things became confused. Thus, when I wanted to kiss my father's hands, I drew back, chilled with cold, for the fingers turned to withered

branches; my father himself became a bare tree, covered with winter rime. . . ."

We see that the poet remained poet, even in his dreams, or rather his genius, always master of invention, subjected to him the fancies created by his delirium. The nightmare became a poem. Another day, his dream was still more strange, and it suggested the theme of his last poem called "The Passion Flower," of which the translation will be found at the end of the book. He knew he was dead, stretched out motionless at the bottom of a magnificent mausoleum which surpassed all the rest in splendour. Incomparable sculptures, and the most costly marble, rendered it unique, whilst admirable bas-reliefs represented by turns imposing and grotesque scenes, divine and droll characters. But what added to the strangeness of the picture

was a sad-coloured plant which rose at the foot of the sarcophagus, and seemed as if it would take root there. One single flower crowned the stalk with lanciniated petals, and, in its pale calyx, he saw distinctly the instruments of torture used for our Lord's crucifixion. Suddenly the flower quickened into life, and assumed a human face. A sad, gentle countenance, bent with a compassionate expression towards the dead man, and he soon recognised the well-known features. Oh! magic of dreams! His distant country was there before him, no longer angry and severe, but indulgent to the poet, smiling upon the man who, in his youth, had felt her charms, and received her promises. He had loved her first under the white frock of a child. After Veronica, he loved her in the fastnesses of the Hartz mountains, under the rosy face of a

miner's daughter. He loved her again as a châtelaine on the banks of the Rhine, a legendary Lorelei, watching proudly from her mountain-top the doom of the victims attracted by her magic song. For the last time to-day she appeared in the form of a flower. A melancholy flower, no doubt, emblem of pain, but still a flower in spite of its mourning and funereal symbols. Heine owed her a smile; he could not refuse it.

XIX.

ONE morning towards the middle of December I heard an animated conversation in the invalid's room. I entered, Mme. Heine was absent, but my usual seat by the bed

was occupied by a fair lady, both elegant and graceful, who shook hands cordially with me, and seemed quite at home. At the same time, a young man with a pleasant face advanced towards me with a bow.

For all introduction, Heine kissed me on the forehead, and said, "Here is my '*mouche*." I found myself in presence of Mme. Charlotte von Embden, the poet's beloved sister, and one of his brothers, M. Gustav Heine, then Editor of the '*Tagblatt*' at Vienna. They both deemed it right to express their grateful thanks, in all sincerity no doubt, but they confused me. Evidently my poor friend, carried away by his tenderness for me, had lauded me to the skies, and I felt quite relieved when Mme. Embden, pleading the necessity of some business conversation between the brothers, carried me off

into the next room. There, face to face, we conversed at length about the man we both loved, gliding past certain delicate subjects and skimming over others, on which we could not dwell at length.

At times, one same thought brought tears into our eyes, and we sat hushed as if all were already over.

We knew, without saying it, that our friend grew rapidly weaker, and that the end was near.

XX.

DID the poet foresee the approach of that end? Did he guess, when taking leave of his brother and his sister, that the farewells would be final?

At all events, that visit made him nervous, restless, agitated, absorbed as it were, by an increase of fresh anxieties. Notwithstanding all these cares and apprehensions, all the more acute, as they rested on the head of a dying man, he remained amiable. I am not alluding now to that animation, wit—that wonderful intellectual vitality which, with him, remained unimpaired in spite of fearful sufferings, but simply of that desire to forget himself in order to please others. Fête-days, New-year's day—all those dates so irksome to an invalid, only aroused in him kind thoughts and pretexts for making presents. He has now been dead more than twenty-six years, but my eyes fill with tears when they rest on the pink silk box he sent me, full of bon-bons, six weeks before his death, on the first of January, 1856 — that same first of

January when he indited to me one of his prettiest letters.

"DEAR CHILD (he wrote),

"I send you my good wishes for the New Year. Though the box may not be tasteful, I hope the chocolate will be to your taste. I know it will not gratify you much if I thus fulfil towards you the duties required by custom, but we must not let those around us suppose any want of mutual esteem. We must therefore be careful not to neglect those little attentions which have become customary. I, for my part, love you so much I cannot see the need of esteem at all. You are my dear '*mouche*,' and my sufferings seem less distressing when I dwell on your sweetness and the charms of your mind. All I can unfortunately do for

you is to send you such words '*de l'air monnayé.*' My best wishes for a happy New Year

"I abstain from expressing them — words, words! I shall perhaps feel well enough to see my '*mouche*' to-morrow. At all events she will come the day after to-morrow, Thursday, to call upon

"HER NEBUCHODONOSOR II.,

"Formerly atheist to his Prussian Majesty, now worshipper of the Lotus-flower."

XXI.

HE possessed up to the last, the same wild fancies, the same audacity of thought and expression, the same versatile wit,

the same horror of false sentimentality, the same delightful blending of deep tenderness and cruel raillery, which caused him to be considered immoral, first by his fellow-countrymen, and then by those who, owing to their character and education, failed to understand the impetuosity and contradictions of the artistic temperament. His was perhaps, one of the most perfect that ever emanated from that mysterious and eternal hand, which uses the same clay to rough-hew clowns and to create poets. With Heinrich Heine, the true man shows himself in his works, we recognise him constantly in his poems, his tales, those picturesque fragments in which he relates unawares, his own story, the story of a mind prematurely embittered by contact with vulgar humanity.

In imitation of great artists, he willingly

takes himself as a subject of study, he has penned numerous sketches, where he borrowed a fancy dress, that which best suited the tone of his mind at the moment, the more or less eccentric tinge of his humour. Unfortunately he only writes in fragments, he confuses various ages, and you perceive the child only through the grown man, as in a labyrinth of floating visions, in semi-obscurity.

Strange dreams, where raillery cloaks tenderness, roseate clouds, where fair angel heads appear between baneful demon-faces, transparent fogs gilded by an imaginary sun, shifting landscapes full of contrasts, sometimes a cloister-garden, and close beside it the blue waters of a Greek river, sometimes Gothic ruins, and close by the Indian cactus, displaying its blood-red purple blossoms.

Amidst all these enchantments appears a scholar, thoughtful or absent, a cynical or mystic student, of whom you will see the original types in the book of "*Tambour Legrand*," or in the memoirs of "*Schnabelewopski*," in the pages of the "Florentine Nights," and in some of the most touching chapters of the "*Reisebilder*." The future Heine shows himself in the expression of his mobile countenance, and in the exuberance of that imagination, wild, powerful, morbid, and passionate. Satire already curls the lip, the forehead is prematurely lined, the soul has strange eccentricities, sometimes fanciful, and at others mournful. What he delights to represent are splendid forms coupled in monstrous groups; here a child pressed against the bosom of a goddess, there a bleeding and swooning youth embracing a sphinx, yonder a man holding in

his arms a corpse. Whether beautiful or revolting, these figures attract and rivet the eye. Behind them you perceive the still stranger figure of the poet, a pale face, with flaming eyes, a calm smile, a head worn by the wear and tear of desires and anxieties, and matured by the tendencies of thoughts that knew no restraint. The mind it contains is naturally rebellious as well as eccentric, from the first he contemned public opinion, he shook himself free of the law. But he was too high-bred to fall into those philosophic sophisms, which, in Schiller's days transformed a disappointed gentleman's son into a leader of banditti, or to accept the fallacies of positivism, which, in our days transform a discontented young man into a pretentious and unscrupulous swindler. On the other hand, he surprises you by the precocious arrogance of his

causticity and disdain, by the audacity of his imaginary desires, by his aversion to any simple and pure creation, by his instinctive search after immoderate and frenzied sensations. With the true skill of a "*raffiné*" artist, he knew how to keep cool, whilst making you shudder.

"Madame," said he recalling one of the most painful recollections of his childhood, "you cannot think how pretty Veronica looked in her little coffin. The burning tapers placed around, lighted up her little pale and smiling face, the red silk rosettes and the gold tinsel leaves, which adorned her tiny head and shroud. Pious Ursula, the nurse, took me one evening to that silent room, and at sight of the coffin, the flowers and the tapers on the table, I fancied she was a beautiful waxen figure, but I soon recognised that dear face, and asked, smiling, why little

Veronica remained so quiet. Ursula replied, 'Death is the cause!'"

Strange to say, living and blooming nature repelled him like a hackneyed show, and for that reason, disagreeable. "Her face," he said of a young girl, "had that physical freshness, those carnation tints, a rose-colour which impress me painfully, for I prefer the tints of a corpse or of marble!"

What he liked, and what fascinated him in the beloved faces of the dead and dying, was the impassive coldness of the being removed from time and real existence. Such is Joanna, the enthusiastic worshipper of the Madonna, she to whom Lorelei, the beautiful fairy of the Rhine, appears in the evening, such is Sophia, the pale girl, who loves Novalis so much and dies from reading his works too often. Such is the mysterious

heroine of the "Florentine Nights," that "Maria *la morte*," whose offended spirit reappears through most of Heine's works, and pursues him incessantly. The women who recur in his imaginings are of too subtle, too exalted a nature, to have endured life for long, they are not women, real blood never ran in their veins. He told me himself, "I have never really loved but statues or dead women!"

Here, as elsewhere, he only bowed down before his dreams, and the indefinable majesty of death, or the sublime pallor of marble, before the distant and tragic apparitions of fancy or of history, before the royal spectre of the imperious Jewess Herodias, before these wonderful creatures compounded of mud and gold, whom he sometimes calls Laurentia or Verry, and who partake of the fairy and the vampire, of the ghoul and the angel.

XXII.

THE month of February began badly. The weather was dark, cold, and wet; and a cold which kept me indoors interrupted, for a time, my visits to him.

He enjoyed much the pretty fairy-tales given by *M. Laboulaye* as New-year's gifts to the readers of the *Journal des Débats*, and he begged me to obtain the number containing the rest of these tales. For want of exact information, I was obliged to go myself and buy the number required, and it was only at the end of the week that I again visited my friend, alas! without suspecting that I should then see him for the last time among the living. When I entered, the deathly pallor of his features struck me. I found him in the twilight of one of the saddest

winter days, mournful, dejected, and depressed. "Here you are at last," he said. He had often before greeted me with the same words, but to-day he uttered them in a tone of reproach rather than affection. Therefore even *he* also misunderstood me. The injustice of the reproach went to my heart: I burst into tears. The difficulty of explaining matters to such an invalid, and of making him believe that in leaving my bed to visit him I had made a great effort, tortured me. Suddenly, in spite of the darkness that concealed my face, he guessed my trouble, he called me to him, and made me sit on the edge of his couch. The tears which ran down my pale cheeks seemed to disturb him greatly.

"Take off your bonnet that I may see you better," he exclaimed.

And with a caressing movement he gently

touched the bow which tied my bonnet. I instantly threw it off and fell on my knees beside the bed. Was it the bitter remembrance of past sorrow, or the still more painful presentiment of future grief? I tried vainly to subdue the sobs which suffocated me, and I felt myself overwhelmed by the violence of my feelings. We remained silent, but he placed his hand on my head and seemed to bless me. Thus passed our last interview.

XXIII.

WHEN on the threshold of his room, almost on the stairs, I heard him cali out, in his dear, vibrating, spasmodic tones—

"Come to-morrow, do not fail!"

And I disobeyed that last request!

XXIV.

THE lapse of a quarter of a century since the events related above has confused some of my recollections. Thus I cannot exactly call to mind the reason of failing to return the next day to my friend. Was I feverish? Was I worse? It is possible, even probable, that I could not undergo such scenes with impunity; for I was young and delicate. I am certain, however, that by a great effort I might have paid that visit, and thereby fulfilled a sacred duty and been spared everlasting remorse. My excuse towards Heine and my vindication towards myself must be, that I felt myself literally breaking down under the weight of an indefinable sensation. When awake, I had a strange feeling of dualism in myself, an intellectual

witchery, which Heine has so well described in one of the poems he addressed to me.[1] When asleep, I felt myself tormented by I know not what dismal nightmare; death pursued and sought to drag me, living and young, down into that gulf opened wide to those who to-morrow will be only dust and ashes.

XXV.

ON that Sunday, February 17th, I awoke in a singular manner. Towards eight o'clock, I heard a noise in my room, a kind of

[1] "Dich fesselt mein Ged ankenbann,
Und was ich denke, must du denken."

My thoughts fill and o'erwhelm thy mind,
What I think doth thine ever bind.

fluttering, like that produced on summer evenings by moths entering the open windows and seeking noisily for egress. I opened my eyes, and closed them again immediately, for a black form was writhing like a gigantic insect in the dawn, and sought some way of escape.

The remembrance of that vision—the only one I ever had—about which I make no comment, and only mention because of its strangeness, will always remain connected in my mind with the date of Heinrich Heine's death.

In spite of the cold and the remains of a severe indisposition, I knocked at ten o'clock at my dear poet's door. When told that he had gone to his last rest, I felt stunned and scarcely understood it. After the first moment of stupor, I asked to see him.

They took me into the silent room where, like a statue on a tomb, the body rested in the majestic calmness of death. Nothing human in that cold corpse, nothing which recalled the man who had loved, hated, and suffered: an ancient mask, over which the final calm cast a frost of haughty indifference, a pale, marble face, the pure profile recalling the most perfect *chef d'œuvre* of Greek sculpture. Such I beheld him for the last time; his features, deified so to speak, brought to mind some beautiful allegory. Death showed itself just towards one who had loved it, and transformed him into a statue, when, like the divine figure depicted in his "Pilgrimage to Kevlaar," the great consoler had, in the early morning hour, bent its steps towards the invalid's couch to release him from his sufferings.

XXVI.

DEATH causes sudden and unreasoning terror. But only a feeling of profound admiration possessed me on beholding that noble form pillowed in everlasting slumber. Astonishment congealed my unshed tears, but the icy coldness of the hand which my lips could not warm, recalled the dire truth. I then understood that he was dead; and, impelled by an involuntary feeling of repulsion, I left the chamber where my presence was no longer of consequence. A kind of bewilderment obscured my ideas; and for the next few days I only experienced one definite feeling, a dead calm, which would last as long as I lived—something like the despair of a shipwrecked mariner who only escapes the tempest to perish in a desert.

All was at an end, and for ever. No more tender words, no cries of joy, or, what affected me more deeply, imprecations, curses, rage, if by chance I arrived late, or felt obliged to shorten my visit. How the lion bounded on his couch when I arrived! And what upbraiding if I delayed! The picture of a torture summed up in two words, a cry of anguish. "You cannot understand the meaning of the word waiting to Prometheus chained to his rock!"

Who amongst my surroundings will ever love me so well? Silence of death! Oh! how I should like to recall the tempest, the cruel importunities which formerly wore away my life, filling my mind with fatal doubts and alarming queries! I had foreseen all except this sudden silence, all save this limitless calm, the mere thought of which weighed more heavily on

my shoulders than the lead of his coffin on his. I often wished to die to escape from him, and he revenged himself from the tomb by crushing me.

POEMS.

POEMS.

The Passion Flower.

I.

MY dream was framed in semi-obscurity. A summer's night. Dim fragments, mutilated remains of a dead magnificence, odds and ends of architecture, ruins from the time of the Renaissance, lie scattered about, beneath the fluctuating light of the moon. Here and there a column, with its classical Doric capital, stands erect amidst the crumbling remains. Pointing daringly towards Heaven, it seems to defy the thunderbolt.

Elsewhere, the remains of porticoes, of gabled

roofs, the corners of which, laboriously carved, are adorned with sculptures representing creatures that are neither man nor beast — gargoyles, sphinxes, centaurs, satyrs, and fabulous monsters; in short, all the fantastic creatures of the mythologic world lie scattered on the ground.

More than one woman's form, sculptured in stone, reposes in the grass, wan nudity, beneath a network of wild vegetation.

Time, that incurable syphilis, has eaten away their noble noses, the classic noses of goddess and nymph.

A marble sarcophagus, the only perfect monument amidst this heap of fragments, dominates the ruins; and in this tomb reposes, preserved likewise from the effects of destruction, a dead man, with a gentle and melancholy countenance. Cariatides, with outstretched necks, support the

monument, and the bas-reliefs round it represent a world of sculptured figures.

Here the eye rests upon the grandeur of Olympus and the wanton heathen goddesses. Standing beside them are seen Adam and Eve, wearing the modest aprons of fig-leaves.

Behold the fall of Troy—Troy perishing in the flames—Paris, Helen, and Hector.

Biblical characters—Aaron, Moses, Judith, and Holophernes, the impious Haman himself—follow in the procession of Greek heroes.

The same bas-relief contains an image of the god Amor, of Phœbus-Apollo; then groups composed of Vulcan and dame Venus, Pluto and Proserpine; lastly, Mercury and Bacchus, accompanied by Priapus and Silenus.

Behind them appears Balaam's ass (the latter a striking likeness); you also see the sacrifice of

Abraham, and Lot (who got tipsy with his daughters).

Here dances Salome; they are bringing in a charger the head of John the Baptist. Further on, Hell with Satan, and St. Peter bearing the gigantic key which opens the gates of Heaven.

Beyond this, a lewd picture, the loves and misdeeds of Jupiter, how he seduced Leda under the guise of a swan, and Danœ as a shower of gold pieces.

Here Diana, followed by her suite of nymphs in short tunics, flashes by, hounds running and panting after her; close by, Hercules, disguised as a woman, spins with the distaff on his arm.

There Mount Sinai comes into view, the Israelites worship the golden calf at the foot of the mountain, and Christ as a child is seen disputing with the elders in the Temple.

The contrasts are boldly expressed. The voluptuousness of pagan Greece and the divine personification of Jewish thought.

The ivy twisting around the figures enwraps them in its gloomy clasp.

Oh! the fancifulness of dreams! Whilst my eyes dwelt upon these sculptures, methought suddenly that I was the dead man filling that magnificent tomb.

A flower bloomed at the head of my couch, a blossom of enigmatical appearance. Its petals were violet and saffron, and it exhaled a wild charm of love.

The people call it "passion flower," and say it sprang up on the soil of Calvary from the crucified Saviour's redeeming blood.

According to the legend, that flower bears a witness of blood, and its calyx repre-

sents all the instruments of our Lord's martyrdom.

Nails, hammer, thongs, and chalice, the cross and the crown of thorns; all the attributes of the passion, all the bloody appliances of torture.

Such a flower grew near my tomb, and bending over my corpse, like a sorrowing woman in mute distress, kissed my forehead, my eyes, my hands.

Oh! sorcery of dreams! Behold, by a strange transformation, the yellow and purple passion flower becomes a woman, and that woman is my beloved.

Yes, thou wast the flower, oh my child! I knew thee by thy kisses. Flower-lips are not so soft, flower-tears do not burn. My eyelids were closed, but my mind still contemplates thy face. Thou didst look at me as if in rapture; pale

thou wert, beneath the rays of the moon, which caressed thee with its fantastic glimpses.

We did not speak, and yet my heart heard what passed in thine; the word pronounced aloud sounds worse, the pure flower of love is silence!

And how eloquent such silence! All can be said without metaphor; the soul sees not the need of hoisting the hypocritical vine-leaf; we understand, without heeding the beauty of the rhyme or the rhythm of the sentence.

Face to face, words unveiled assume too crude an aspect. Flesh is subject to the conditions of time and place, but thoughts know no fetters.

By a calm look they seal their agreement. Sometimes urged by a strange desire, they rush

into folly; then suddenly they reappear as white and spotless as regal swans.

Mute dialogue — we can scarcely believe how time flies, during the silent converse, in the delightful dream of a summer's night, interwoven with pleasure and terror. Never ask me what we said. Question the glow-worm as to whence comes its brightness, or bid the wave explain its murmuring; ask the west wind the meaning of its moanings and plaints.

Seek the purport of the fire in the carbuncle, or of the perfume in the rose, but never—dost thou heed me?—never ask about what the dead man and the flower of martyrdom communed together under the moon's rays in the funereal garden.

I ignore how long I enjoyed that beautiful

calm dream in my cool marble cell. Alas! my quietude soon vanished.

Thou alone, O Death, with thy sepulchral silence, canst give us perfect delight. Brutal and absurd life gives us the convulsions of passion — that is to say, harassed and anxious pleasure, incessant agitation, as true happiness.

Alas! shocking clamours from without, ended my bliss. My flower fled before the vulgar noise of a low dispute. Yes! I heard the sound of voices raised in quarrel in transports of rage. Certain accents struck me. I fancied I recognised the tones of the personages sculptured on the bas-relief of my tomb.

What! can the superannuated ghost of Faith haunt the stone? Does dissension appear amongst marble groups? There is Pan's warning cry—

wild god of the forests, who seems to rival in energy Moses in his wrath.

Never can that quarrel end, for strife will ever exist between the beautiful and the true; the army of humanity must always remain divided into two camps—that of the Barbarians and that of the Hellenes.

How they abused each other! What insults they hurled at one another! Their insipid controversy was never-ending! There was especially a certain ass, Balaam's ass; it made more noise than the gods and the saints together.

With its hee-haw, hee-haw, its ridiculous and stupid braying, the foolish beast provoked me. At last, even I screamed aloud and awoke.

II.

THOU art bound within the magic circle of my thoughts, and when I imagine and dream, so must thou in thy turn dream and imagine in like manner.

Thou canst not escape from my mind's embrace. Its fierce breath envelops thee; even in thy bed, thou art not safe from its sneer and its caress.

Whilst my corpse lies in the tomb, my mind survives, and, like a familiar spirit, occupies thy heart, my ever graceful one. Vouchsafe it readily the soft little nest. Whatever thou mayest do, thou canst never escape from the monster, the poor scamp, didst thou even flee to Japan or China.

For, wherever thou mayest wander, my spirit

nestles in thy heart; it there dreams its foolish dreams, and there attempts its somersaults.

Dost thou hear? It is making music, and its bounds, like its chords, have such power that the fly, wandering in the folds of thy curtain, pauses entranced and leaps with joy.

III.

TEAR my sides, my chest, my face, with red-hot pincers, flay me alive, shoot, stone me, rather than keep me waiting.

With all imaginable torture, cruelly break my limbs, but do not keep me waiting; for of all torments disappointed expectation is the most painful.

I expected thee all yesterday afternoon until

six o'clock. But thou didst not come, thou witch, and I grew almost mad. Impatience encircled me like the folds of a viper, and I bounded on my couch at every ring, but oh! mortal anguish, it did not bring thee.

Thou didst fail to come; I fret, I fume, and Satanas whispered mockingly in my ear—"The charming lotus-flower makes fun of thee, thou old fool!"

IV.

WORDS, words, and no deeds! Never any meat, darling dolly. Always soul, and never any roast! For ever *soupe maigre.* Who knows if the fierce bounds of Dame Nature, riding her hobby-horse, Passion; who

knows if that diabolical chase, the diurnal gallop of the great steeple-chase of love, would not end by exhausting thy delicate person?

Believe me, for thee, darling, a cripple like me is the most healthy of lovers. Therefore I invite thee, my charmer, to devote all the strength of thy soul to the consolidating of our *intellectual* ties. Such a regimen will suit thee excellently well.

THE END.

S0-BUW-897